

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

**PARTIAL RESUBMISSION OF REMARKS FROM NOVEMBER 11, 2005
REPLY RELATIVE TO CITED PRIOR ART IN BARNI AND CHOW**

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. 112

4. From the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112: The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
5. Claims 32 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 32, who or what is doing the steps of inputting, transmitting or receiving and in claim 33, who or what is responding to the bid selection. Also in claim 32, the insufficient antecedent basis requirement for the limitation “bid report” has been corrected. These clarification requirements, limitation basis and other United States Patent Office suggestions can be seen addressed in the fully amended claim 32 and claim 33 on Page 20. of this reply.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

6. 35 U.S.C. 103(a) forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in the United States Patent Office Action and are individually addressed within the pages of this reply.
7. Claims 32 – 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (US 6,035,289) Chou et al, hereafter Chou in view of (US 6,6064,981) Barni et al, hereafter Barni.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

The following considerably expanded method and system remarks relative to that as patented by the two aforementioned United States Patent Office prior art assertions, supplementing those re-submitted herein from the Applicant's Office Action Reply of November 13, 2004, comprehensively address in substantive detail both Chou and Barni, and the obvious to one skilled in the art references, in conjunction with the subsequent individual explanation responses to counter the United States Patent Office's deficiency assertions, most emphatically show that the subject-matter of Mr. John C. Abendroth's claims are indeed inventive steps:

The United States Patent Office has apparently totally misunderstood both Chou and Barni along with inadvertently miss-characterizing Mr. Abendroth's invention; thereby, unfortunately reaching a false conclusion not based on the actual facts which define the methods and systems of the two above patents and this application. As presented here and in prior submittals, Mr. Abendroth has developed a truly Comprehensive Freight Management Method and System, not simply an online platform or trading module for an electronic auction, reverse auction or typical bidding process.

As per claim 32. The United States Patent Office states that Chou teaches, A freight management method for arranging for shipment of a load from a shipper by a carrier, based on shipping data and carrier data supplied by the shipper and the carrier, respectively, the method comprising: inputting into the central processing system a request for bids from the shipper for shipping the load (col.6, lines 34-51); electronically transmitting an invitation to bid for shipping the load from the central processing system to a plurality of carriers (col. 5, line 31- col. 6, line 21) (NOTE: This is not true, for this transmission does not occur in

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

Chou as is shown in detail on Pages 5., 6., 7., 8., 9, 10. and 11. of this reply.) and electronically receiving bids at the central processing system from at least some of the carriers for shipping the load (col. 10, line 53-col. 11, line 64) (NOTE: This also does not reflect Chou and again is shown on the aforementioned referenced pages herein.).

All previous and all future freight management methods and systems have required and will need the participation of shippers and carriers along with each supplying information or data relative either to the load to be transported or the means of transportation along with an agreed upon time and cost to move same. This basic and most obvious, time immemorial concept is universal and should not be patentable in and of itself. Therefore, one must look at the actual offering and implementation along with the resulting benefits of the method and system to show a uniqueness not found in other potential prior art in e-commerce freight management patents. When understood, there are method and system subject-matters so unique that they cannot be achieved regardless of even combining multiple patents, theoretically under an obviousness collaboration approach of reasoning – Mr. Abendroth's application.

Now reviewing the actual Chou patent, it is a METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ELECTRONIC TRADING OF CARRIER CARGO CAPACITY. You will note in the ABSTRACT: A computer-implemented method for double auction trade-building by matching, based on feasibility and price/cost heuristics, a plurality of electronically posted bid with a plurality of electronically posted ask records. A one-pass sequential trade building method selects ask records one at a time and sequentially inserts, in one pass, as many of the bid records as possible while maintaining feasibility criteria. A two-pass sequential trade building method

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

inserts the bid records in two states, the first terminating when the trade becomes feasible and the second when no further bids can be inserted.

This finite and extremely restrictive, controlled mathematical selection process method and system completely precludes the necessary flexibility and multiple, varied, open and combination comparative offer, response and selection conclusion elements required in a truly versatile freight transportation management "tool" as presented by Mr. Abendroth.

WHAT DOES THE CHOU METHOD AND SYSTEM ACTUALLY DO? This is where I feel that the United States Patent Office has misunderstood the Chou patent and subsequently incorrectly concluded that Chou is prior art to the detriment of Mr. Abendroth's application. The following will set aside the complexity expressed and potential intimidation posed by the plethora of high-level, complex mathematical terminology and constraint, heuristic equations to show exactly how Chou works:

While shippers could use such a method and system, there is no question but that its benefits are truly directed to carriers relative to pricing – this is a fixed route, carrier cargo capacity optimizer. However, it is way too limited, overly restrictive and lacks some extremely critical elements to be able to operate as purported by Chou, along with being able to actually address supply and demand price fluctuations in the marketplace.

SHIPPER & CARRIER INPUTTING INTO THE CHOU METHOD & SYSTEM:

Shippers enter "Bids" which include: Volume or weight of goods
(Placed in Bid Records) Origin and Departure Time

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

Destination and Arrival Time

Bid Price (NOTE: The shipper has to indicate the acceptable price – not the way for a shipper to receive competitive rates. This inherent flaw cannot be corrected no matter on how many factors this amount may be based.)

Carriers enter "Asks" which include: Available Cargo Capacity
(Placed in Ask Records)

Origin and Departure Time

Destination and Arrival Time

Ask Price (NOTE: Minimum price set by Carrier for a full load for the route; yet, it's comprised of Bid Prices set by the Shippers for each individual load for each individual route – Carrier load-building inserts the individual Shipper asks to make up a full load and subsequently the price or bid the Carrier will receive from all of the individual Shippers with their individual loads for the full route – this total must at least meet the original minimum

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

Carrier Ask for the route to be considered price feasible or the Chou method and System will render the route infeasible and not accept a match – a route must have a price ratio greater than or equal to 1 (the minimum), an all or nothing state.)

One can see that Chou is very inflexible with numerous feasibility constraints, and ironically while favoring carriers, it hurts both shippers (bidders) and carriers (askers) – pricing is set so negotiating is never and can never be an option in the Chou approach.

The Chou Double Auction Bid-Ask Matching for Trade Building is based on the aforementioned Shipper Bid Records and Carrier Ask Records in a constraint-driven, matching, route-building process. It focuses on Pick-up and Delivery Problems with Time Windows (PDPTW) which are also Node or NP-Hard. First is a One-Pass Sequential Trade Building (1-PSTB) approach which starts with time and capacity criteria placing asks in ascending order based on the shipper prices along with the Origin and Destination Nodes. Secondly, the ask selection is based on the maximum increase in price ratio for the route. This is considered a Basic Trade.

The Two-Pass Sequential Trade Building (2-PSTB) approach is similar to the One-Pass with the exception that it does not address a maximum increase in the price ratio for the route but rather combines Basic Trades together to form

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

completed Trade Routes. In this route-building, the Chou Method and System states that it is intended to help fill carrier cargo capacities for less-than-container loads (LCL) or less-than-truckloads (LTL), which theoretically with all of its impressive mathematical nomenclature it could help in a very simplistic manner, but at what cost, as its limitations appear to far outweigh its benefits in the area of freight management.

Chou has a number of criteria that would render a basic trade feasible or non-executable, but not enough factors to render the system freight industry viable.

12 STEPS SUMMARIZING USE OF THE CHOU METHOD AND SYSTEM:

- (1) Bid(s) (Request) is/are inputted by Shipper(s) (Bid Records)
- (2) Bid(s) (Request) is/are NOT electronically transmitted to Carrier(s)
They are only stored in the Central Processing System
- (3) Ask(s) (Bid) is/are inputted by Carrier(s) (Ask Records)
- (4) Ask(s) (Bid) is/are NOT electronically transmitted to Shipper(s)
They are only stored in the Central Processing System
- (5) Following either a One-Pass (1-PSTB) or Two-Pass (2-PSTB)
Feasibility determination by the Method, the Central Processing System generates a Match or indicates Unfeasibility through insertion of Shipper(s) Bid(s) meeting volume and/or weight constraints, the route's origin and destination constraints, the departure and arrival time constraints and price constraints as they solely or in combination with other Shipper Asks meet the minimum price acceptable to the Carrier from the Bid Records.
- (6) Since each Shipper Bid can only be assigned to ONE Carrier Ask, who or what determines to which Carrier's Ask it first be inserted

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

should both Carriers deliver on the same route – this priority would be important to participating Carriers?

- (7) Since Shipper Bid loads CANNOT be split between Carrier Asks, interlining on Shipper's load(s) between Carriers is not possible and larger Shipper Load Bids have limited possibilities in carrier selection with this Method and System
- (8) Therefore, there are NO electronic transmissions of multiple Asks (Bids) from Carriers to a Shipper for a individual Shipper's Load Bid (Request) for the System or operator of the system decides same.
- (9) Also, subsequently there are then NO electronically transmitted Shipper Carrier selections for the Shipper has no choice in the matter.
- (10) The Method is then completed by posting all of the executable trades by whom?, by what?, where?
- (11) Are Shipper(s) and Carrier(s) specifically alerted as to match(es)?
- (12) What happens then? Are the Shipper's and Carrier's names, phone numbers, etc. indicated to both the Carrier and Shipper respectively? Is there a confirmation by both Shipper(s) and Carrier(s)? How? Are these Binding Agreement(s)? If not the Trade-Built Route becomes unfeasible due to minimum pricing constraints should even only one of the multiple Shippers decline.

There are so many inherent problems and so many additional constraints that are required over and above those aforementioned for the Chou purely hands-off computerized heuristics driven method and system determining the final selection to have any more than an extremely limited real-world application. Examples of other selection criteria needed but impossible to add to the Chou approach would include: Shipper and Carrier qualifications, additional equipment

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

requirements, driver qualifications, extensive load specifications, load and loading requirements, one time or multiple delivery, and since Chou is Trade-building in routes with multiple stops – resulting last in first out scenarios plus load balance and important load compatibility factors, Dun & Bradstreet ratings, annual revenues (Corporate size requirements), on time and damage free delivery history, Carriers' Rules and Charges which address potential substantial price overages during the full transportation cycle being different for each Carrier, etc.

The above explanations show the fallacies in the Chou's adaptation as not being able to address the significant complexities necessary in an overall freight management method and system integrating and providing and protecting the unique and particular interests of the various and multiple individual participating entities and services as never before possible as is provided by Mr. Abendroth's unique invention incorporating the use of a "grand master bulletin board" concept relative multiple, diverse, fragmented and highly competitive elements to interrelate privately or publicly in operations, combination and independently through a dynamic data driven transportation tool providing unequaled freight management, operations, coordination, communication, combinations and comparisons across various sectors of the industry.

This industry while appearing simple in overview is extremely complex in a multitude of inter-relational elements. The inventive steps necessary to specifically address those many varied bits to achieve dramatically different alternative operational results is what actually and very importantly differentiates the subject-matter of individual applicant claims relating in general to the freight transportation industry and more specifically to freight transportation management.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

The other prior art assertion by the United States Patent Office is Barni, METHOD FOR ONLINE DISPLAY AND NEGOTIATION OF CARGO RATES. You will note in the ABSTRACT: Freight forwarders and carriers post published Rate and discount information for land, sea and air bearing cargo vessels to allow customers the opportunity to evaluate competitive prices, preferably in one consolidated location (e.g. a web site). A customer navigates to the site to obtain published or discounted site information offered by a freight forwarder or carrier. The customer may accept a posted rate, in which case the site operator notifies the freight forwarder or carrier. Alternatively, customers, freight forwarders and carrier may negotiate rates for particular lanes of interest using an online interactive auction block. (NOTE: Site operator notification is hardly an automatic transmission and totally unacceptable. Will it then be by e-mail along with all of the timing and awareness negativity surrounding such communication?)

It is an approach narrowly addressing the posting of fixed rates by freight forwarders and carriers for specific lanes in the shipping of containers worldwide, the published or discount rate information to be viewed by customers or buyers of such services. As another option, buyers can indicate (this is not negotiating as stated in Barni) a specific amount that they will pay for such services and use an Internet interactive auction block to solicit a carrier or freight forwarder for a particular lane of interest to accept the amount which is other than their posted or discounted rates to move one or more containers. This again, as with the other cited examples, does not even begin to address the multi-faceted approach to areas of freight transportation management as possible with Mr. Abendroth's application.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

This posting of published rate and discount information is nothing more than a static database on the internet that is updated from time to time by the participating carriers, the same information also being available in hard copy printed rate schedules. In Barni, the site operator notifies a carrier when a shipper accepts their rate or discount for particular lane – this is NOT an automatic process. A shipper using only a rate book could contact a carrier directly with the identical result. In addition and ironically, using the posted rate portion of Barni, the name of the carrier is indicated (i.e.: Sea Land , Evergreen, etc.), which would allow a shipper to totally by-pass the method and system by NOT accepting online but rather use the information to contact the carrier directly outside of the system and then accept the carrier's posted rate for the lane, eliminating the need for the shipper or the carrier to pay for services rendered via the Barni system – a real problem that would occur over and over again. However, making the names of the carriers and the shippers anonymous for either the posted rates or for the auction block portion of Barni has its own major pitfalls due to how the Barni method and system operates.

Being anonymous, the Shipper and Carriers need to know enough about the other party or the amount of a bid is meaningless. Critical factors must be known about the other party before they will even consider working together regardless of the price. Again as previously stated with Chou, other criteria must be known in a freight management approach including: Shipper and Carrier qualifications, equipment requirements, driver qualifications, extensive load specifications, load and loading requirements, one time or multiple delivery, and since Chou is Trade-building in routes with multiple stops – resulting last in first out scenarios plus load balance and important load compatibility factors, Dun & Bradstreet ratings, annual revenues (Corporate size requirements), on time and damage

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

free delivery history, etc. And, again as with Chou, Barni does not provide this needed information within the system.

Using the Auction Block in Barni, when an acceptance is made by either a Shipper of a Seller Bid or by a Carrier of a Buyers Bid, the operator (NOTE: hardly automatic and again poses a real question of timing.) may send a confirmation e-mail to the other party. The e-mail when sent to both parties is to confirm the acceptance along with a confirmation agreement identifying the terms and conditions that have been agreed upon (Shouldn't that have been fully presented before an acceptance was made?), plus the names of the parties if they were originally listed as anonymous. Also, being by e-mail, this is not part of the online method and system screen portion and with the amount of e-mail sent in today's world at thousands per day in business environments, knowing when to look, then to find the specific e-mail, then to open and read same and finally to relate it to your load data on the internet system would be extremely time intensive and difficult at best. Many e-mails today are never read due to the enormous volume received. Is there then a re-confirmation? Additionally, as mentioned before, it is hardly a negotiation as stated in Barni, since there is no possibility for back and forth multiple bid offerings to arrive at a final price.

The United States Patent Office has given Chou credit on the basis of being implicit for both a method for a bid reporting method from which a shipper can select one bidder (NOTE: Even though no report format is indicated in the process). In fact, the Chou shipper bids instead are addressed one at a time via insertion in carrier asks, again one at a time, until proven to be considered part of an unfeasible rout process in which a report format would not work, yet the United States Patent Office has combined a partial functionality offered by Barni assuming it to become a multiple bid listing report (NOTE: Which it also is NOT.)

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

and then declaring it to be implicit. Mr. Abendroth's approach uniquely, the central processing system automatically electronically selects and transmits to the shipper, carrier bids in groups of seven for review and possible selection by the shipper as indicated in claim 7 (as submitted in the original application which was rejected because of form and language, revised in a new claim in a revised submittal which, in turn, has presently been withdrawn from consideration). Also, the name identification process for both the shippers and the carriers is not at all clear (Immediate? Retractable? Requested? Method?), yet again, Chou is given an implicit pass.

To make an assumption that a person skilled in the art would consider that the transmission of invitations to bid (ask) to prospective carriers in Chou (NOTE: Which, in fact as has been shown previously in this reply, never occurs, as the system totally controls the outcome without any viewing by the carriers, shipper bids being inserted in their asks as arbitrarily selected by the computer system.) would credit Chou with a modification not stated or claimed by combining same with a concept in another claimant's application, Barni (NOTE: Which would be categorically impossible, due to the inherent nature of each), along with indicating that the prospective bidders were to be pre-selected to supposedly be more efficient going from Chou back to Barni and purporting that such an alteration in Chou is a fair analysis, is anything but fair. Also in both Chou and Barni it would be unreasonable to send invitations to carriers who do not offer certain shipment services, yet that literally misses one of the inventive features offered by Mr. Abendroth's invention, wherein such carriers might well receive such invitations as interlining, brokering, equipment leasing or renting, new lane or region expansion efforts, etc. allow for these additional carrier service opportunities. The United States Patent Office must truly understand the methods and systems of both Chou and Barni before ruling that Mr. Abendroth's

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

method and system is just more of the same and does not contain inventive steps.

Since it is impossible to combine the teachings of Chou and Barni, as aforementioned, to modify the shipping method of Chou; therefore, Chou can never arrive at the subject-matter of claim 32 (original claim 1) – as claim 32 of Mr. Abendroth's revised application along with its numerous supportive dependent claims presently withdrawn from consideration does, in fact, comprise a inventive steps. A review of all of these claims together will indicate the very unique unrivaled approach provided by the grand master bulletin board concept.

The United States Patent Office has asserted that none of the dependent claims 1 - 36 (which were rejected) or the revised claims 37 – 66, which have been withdrawn from consideration and claims 32 – 36 presently remaining rejected even in combination with those to which they refer meet the requirements relative to inventive-steps. The thrust of these claims has previously been merely set aside without review, which hopefully following the amendments to claims, as suggested by the United States Patent Office, shown later in this reply will finally be able to be examined. Certain claims, which might initially appear to duplicate prior art in either the real or the electronic world necessarily appear in all freight transportation approaches such as having both shippers and carriers participate, or having a shipper make a request for bids, or having carriers submitting bids on such a request, as has taken place in freight transportation industry since its inception, all of which should be considered implicit in any freight method and system, are not the thrust of Mr. Abendroth's application but stand only as operationally necessary base components from which spring, in this applicant's revolutionary new Method and System for E-commerce Freight Management, the new subject-matter in support of the claims.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

This application for patent brings truly inventive-steps in overall freight transportation management -- not just providing more efficiency or the optimization of typical implicit freight operations. Making an impossible interpretation which disallows even the mentioning of typical base components in claims would both produce confusion and a lack of clarity while losing the context of both asserted independent and relevant dependent claims, subsequently disallowing most every even remotely relevant patent applications or approaches including the presently referenced Chou and Barni.

Relative to claim 32, again Chou is being credited with additional concepts silent within its claims, the flexibility of differentiation in areas and system approach being critical both in being able to effectively electronically and meaningfully incorporate the data within the system process to obtain the varied alternatives and versatility of use in the results. Chou is an entirely different approach, completely unlike Mr. Abendroth's application in its results, intent and functionality. As aforementioned, Chou incorporates a double auction trade-building method of matching based on feasibility and price/cost heuristics using a one-pass and two pass sequential system addressing a plurality of bid posting and ask records using a very complex mathematical formula sequencing (See col. 6, line 52 through col. 15, line 6.).

One trained in the art can see by reviewing the high level mathematical formulas certainly developed by one with an extensive mathematical education shown in the above listed ten columns within Chou's application indicate an approach that restrictively controls the results, lacking flexibility and disallowing combination, multiple and relative use incorporation with its results found in Mr. Abendroth's freight transportation management application providing a truly unique transportation tool. Simply indicating that one is using parts of a list of

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

parameters does not indicate prior art in the invention. How those parts are used and the complete flexibility, purpose and use of the subsequent choices is paramount.

The subject-matter of claim 32 as features in original claim 1 are inventive steps for the reasons such as the central processing system automatically, electronically selecting and transmitting to shippers, carriers bid responses in a bid report in groups of seven, in ascending or descending order based upon the carriers bid price depending upon the type of request, generated by the central processing system for review and possible selection by the shipper along with other features previously stated in this response.

Claims 33 – 36 do, in fact, contain features which in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer do meet requirements with respect to inventive steps. Unfortunately the United States Patent Office has, up to this point in time, refused to review all of the claims in Mr. Abendroth's application on their merits.

Combining Barni with Chou to reveal a carrier's name and phone number to the shipper, initially working on a completely anonymous basis, Chou is now being given the telephone number option by assuming that a skilled person would implement that step in such a manner after a carrier selection by the central processing system. Claim 33, while offering an anonymous open system approach, electronically presents the carrier information to the shipper automatically by the central processing system immediately following a shipper's selection, but this applicant's system also incorporates the use of private access networks in which all shipper names, carrier names and complete respective profiles are known as an important part of the system.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

Claim 34 as stated in relation with the supporting claims addressing transportation brokers and third party logistics (3PL) are not known in the state of the art or as indicated in the electronic auction systems of Chou or Barni as it is applied in this application. First, this is not a typical auction system as previously indicated and second, loads offered by brokers or 3PLs can be duplicate offerings of those by the original shipper, combined offerings, separate offerings, fixed or revised offerings all so indicated by prefixes and/or suffixes, none of which would be found with either Chou or Barni.

Claims 35 and 36 relating to prior explanations of other claims within this reply necessarily address a plurality of loads to an individual carrier, as a carrier being offered only one load would not be in business very long especially if that carrier were not successful in obtaining that one load. In addition, shippers necessarily will need to receive bids from a plurality of loads from a plurality of carriers, the methodology of this process being, as aforementioned, unique.

**PARTIAL RESUBMISSION OF REMARKS FROM MAY 16, 2005 REPLY
RELATIVE TO CITED PRIOR ART IN BARNI AND CHOW**

REMARKS

Historical background information relative to Mr. Abendroth's submittal to the United States Patent Office includes the original filing date of December 26, 2000 which had Claims 1 - 36. The United States Patent Office Disposition of Claims indicated a rejection of Claims 1 – 36. All of the submitted claims were rejected on the basis of being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regarded as the invention. Claim 1 was to be redrafted in the proper English and claim format. Clarification was requested in others, acronyms like "RFB" were to be written as "Request for

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

Bids" both in the claim language and in the Specification. The claims appeared to be in recitation format found in the Specification and were not examinable in that present claim format. MPEP 608.01(n) for Form of Claims and review the claim formats of enclosed references were to be used as a guide for a re-submittal. Also, method claims were to contain method steps for performing the process – not mixing method steps with system steps in the body of a claim. Ironically, the United States Patent Office's recitation example for such a step in Claim 1 indicated a complete misunderstanding of the inventive step by misstating the process. Also, the inference was made that Claim 2 used phrases causing a clarity problem. Then in like manner, Claims 2 - 36 were stated to have similar problems and would not be reviewed until a redrafting and correction of the claims was completed in order for the Examiner to give the claims a proper examination on the merits.

Mr. Abendroth's reply to the United States Patent Office action of April 6, 2004 (April 2, 2004) cancelled Claims 1 – 31 and replaced them with new claims 37 – 66 to meet the aforementioned stated re-drafting requirements with Claims 32 – 36 remaining as original. Now, these new claims have been withdrawn by the United States Patent Office from consideration in their response leaving only the five Claims 32 – 36 original claims previously rejected as being not examinable based on form and language requirements which, as before, have again been rejected, yet this time apparently examinable without any changes having been made. The aforementioned first rejection of Claims 1 – 36 and subsequent withdrawing of Claim 37 – 66 is most disappointing as well as confusing for much time, effort and expense has been expended initially to present the first submittal of inventive steps of this application followed by a simplification of language and format in the subsequent submittal, yet to no avail. To reject out of hand without an in depth review in an attempt to truly understand the subject-matter and guide

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

the applicant with a meaningful response, literally gutting the application by removing from examination the unique and important supporting dependent claimed inventive steps along with the independent method and system claims is most frustrating. It has now been approximately four and one half years since the original submittal which was prepared by very experienced patent attorneys highly skilled in the art, Quarles & Brady, LLP; yet, the merits of the application for patent have been presently just set aside. This applicant respectfully requests that the United States Patent Office re-address the prior submittals and comment on the full content of all of the claims. If such a review is not the intent of the United States Patent Office, this applicant reserves the right to file a Divisional Application to re-submit the original Claims 1 – 36 as well as the new Claims 37 – 66 for consideration.

This present applicant's reply to the Office Action will be addressing Claims 32 – 36 along with indicating areas of inventive steps within the claim withdrawn from consideration or those originally submitted as well as addressing the two specific cited prior art along with brief remarks relative to prior art made of record and not relied upon yet considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure as indicated in the United States Patent Office Actions.

Claims 32 – 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over (US 6,035,289) Chou et al, hereafter Chou in view of (US 6,6064,981) Barni et al, hereafter Barni.

The following general remarks briefly address the two United States Patent Office cited possible prior art, Chou and Burni, and obvious to one skilled in the art references, in conjunction with the subsequent individual explanation responses to the United States Patent Office's deficiency assertions, to

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

definitively show that the subject-matter of Mr. John C. Abendroth's claims are indeed inventive steps:

The Chou approach dealing exclusively in containerized ocean transportation does not even come close to many of the very important distinguishing elements in this applicant's submittal.

The United States Patent Office has inadvertently miss-characterized Mr. Abendroth's invention. This applicant has developed a truly Comprehensive Freight Management Method and System, not simply an online platform or trading module for an electronic auction, reverse auction or typical bidding process.

The Chou approach is directed very narrowly to a specialized segment of freight transportation addressing customized contracts to offer for auction the bids from ocean carriers and freight forwarders exclusively in containerized ocean transportation, in their case adapting obvious shipping factors, missing others required in their application while completely ignoring many key factors necessarily incorporated within Mr. Abendroth's invention. Chou's adaptation is not an overall freight management method and system integrating all of the individual participating entities and services as never before as is provided by Mr. Abendroth's unique invention incorporating the use of a "grand master bulletin board" concept relative multiple, diverse, fragmented and highly competitive elements to interrelate privately or publicly in operations, combination and independently through a dynamic data driven transportation tool providing unequaled freight management, operations, coordination, communication, combinations and comparisons across various sectors of the industry. Apparently the United States Patent Office, as of the present, has not yet

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

recognized the importance of the substantial differences generated by this fact as it applies specifically to freight transportation and the affiliated networks served.

The other two references cited Chou and Barni in the field of freight transportation would disqualify each other, if one were not to address the unique differences between the two offerings and relied only on basic, obvious, fundamentals and foundations required in any and all freight transportation operations. This industry while appearing simple in overview is extremely complex in a multitude of inter-relational elements. The inventive steps necessary to specifically address those many varied bits to achieve dramatically different alternative operational results is what actually and very importantly differentiates the subject-matter of individual applicant claims relating in general to the freight transportation industry and more specifically to freight transportation management.

Chou is an approach incorporating a double auction trade-building method of matching based on feasibility and price/cost heuristics using a one-pass and two pass sequential system addressing a plurality of bid posting and ask records using a very complex mathematical formula sequencing. This finite and extremely restrictive, controlled mathematical selection process method and system completely precludes the necessary flexibility and multiple, varied, open and combination comparative offer, response and selection conclusion elements required in a truly versatile freight transportation management "tool" as presented by Mr. Abendroth.

Barni is an approach narrowly addressing the posting of fixed rates by freight forwarders and carriers for specific lanes in the shipping of containers worldwide, the published or discount rate information to be viewed by customers or buyers

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

of such services. As another option, buyers can negotiate by indicating a specific amount that they will pay for such services and use an Internet interactive auction block to solicit a carrier or freight forwarder for particular lane of interest to accept the amount which is other than their posted or discounted rates to move one or more containers. This again, as with the other cited examples, does not even begin to address the multi-faceted approach to areas of freight transportation management as possible with Mr. Abendroth's application.

Mr. Abendroth's present patent application according to the European Patent Office does not meet the requirements of Article 52(1) EPC because Claim 1 subject-matter does not involve an inventive step according to Article 56 EPC. This infers, as aforementioned, that the asserted prior art indicated by Chou and Barni addressed in Mr. Abendroth's comments above have included within their submittals all of Mr. Abendroth's claims – an understanding not shared by this applicant and which will be addressed in detail following:

Summarizing Chou, members could exchange quotation and booking orders and post shipments for bids from multiple providers. Received competitive bids from qualified carriers are posted on the web site. Shipper's shipment specifications construct customized contracts to offer for auction bidding. Service providers can search via a few factors and bid and re-bid on any shipment until the auction closes. The shipper chooses the winning bid based on factors in the service provider's reply.

The United States Patent Office has given Chou credit on the basis of being implicit for both a method for a bid reporting method from which a shipper can select one bidder (even though no report format is indicated in the process – in fact, the Chou bids instead may have been transmitted one at a time and viewed

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

individually since a logistics solution parameter was to be part of the selection process by the shipper in which a report format would not work, yet the United States Patent Office has combined a partial functionality offered by Barni assuming it to become a multiple bid listing report and then declaring it to be implicit. Mr. Abendroth's approach uniquely, automatically electronically selects and transmits to the shipper, carrier bids in groups of seven for review and possible selection by the shipper as indicated in claim 7 (as submitted in the original application which was rejected because of form and language, revised in a new claim in a revised submittal which, in turn, has been withdrawn from consideration). Also, the anonymous name identification process for both the shippers and the carriers is not at all clear (Immediate? Retractable? Requested? Method?), yet again, Chou is given an implicit pass.

To make an assumption that a person skilled in the art would consider that the transmission of invitations to bid to prospective bidders in Chou would credit Chou with a modification not stated or claimed by combining same with a concept in another claimant's application, Barni, along with indicating that the prospective bidders were to be pre-selected to supposedly be more efficient going from Chou back to Barni and purporting that such an alteration in Chou is not only a fair analysis. Also in both Chou and Barni it would be unreasonable to send invitations to carriers who do not offer certain shipment services, yet that literally misses one of the inventive features offered by Mr. Abendroth's invention, wherein such carriers might well receive such invitations as interlining, brokering, equipment leasing or renting, new lane or region expansion efforts, etc. allow for these additional carrier service opportunities.

Combining the teachings of Chou and Barni however and for whatever reasons along with modifying the shipping method of Chou does not arrive at the

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

subject-matter of claim 32 (original claim 1) – as claim 32 of Mr. Abendroth's revised application along with its numerous supportive dependent claims presently withdrawn from consideration does, in fact, comprise a inventive steps. A review of all of these claims together will indicate the very unique unrivaled approach provided by the grand master bulletin board concept.

The United States Patent Office asserts that none of the dependent claims 1 - 36 (which were rejected) or the revised claims 37 – 66, which have been withdrawn from consideration and claims 32 – 36 remaining rejected even in combination with those to which they refer meet the requirements relative to inventive-steps. The thrust of these claims has been merely set aside without review. Certain claims, which might initially appear to duplicate prior art in either the real or the electronic world necessarily appear in all freight transportation approaches such as having both shippers and carriers participate, or having a shipper make a request for bids, or having carriers submitting bids on such a request, as has taken place in freight transportation industry since its inception, all of which should be considered implicit in any freight method and system, are not the thrust of Mr. Abendroth's application but stand only as operationally necessary base components from which spring, in this applicant's revolutionary new Method and System for E-commerce Freight Management, the new subject-matter in support of the claims.

This application for patent brings truly inventive-steps in overall freight transportation management -- not just providing more efficiency or the optimization of typical implicit freight operations. Making a narrow interpretation which disallows even the mentioning of typical base components in claims would both produce confusion and a lack of clarity while losing the context of both asserted independent and relevant dependent claims, subsequently disallowing

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

most every even remotely relevant patent applications or approaches including the presently referenced Chou and Barni as well as previously referenced but not relied upon asserted prior art but considered pertinent to Mr. Abendroth's disclosure in the original submittal, Chou et al (US 6,035,289) and indicated above, Kara (US 6,233,568) and O'Neill et al (US 6,219,653), as well as, in the revised application Chou and Barni also indicated above along with other made of record prior art previously referenced but not relied upon yet considered pertinent to Mr. Abendroth's disclosure, Hunt et al (US 5,835,716), Carroll et al (US 5,337,246), Hafner et al (US 5,893,076) and Altendahl et al (US 6,571,213).

Relative to claim 32, again Chou is being credited with additional concepts silent within its claims, the flexibility of differentiation in areas and system approach being critical both in being able to effectively electronically and meaningfully incorporate the data within the system process to obtain the varied alternatives and versatility of use in the results. Chou is an entirely different approach, completely unlike Mr. Abendroth's application in its results, intent and functionality. As aforementioned, Chou incorporates a double auction trade-building method of matching based on feasibility and price/cost heuristics using a one-pass and two pass sequential system addressing a plurality of bid posting and ask records using a very complex mathematical formula sequencing (See col. 6, line 52 through col. 15, line 6.).

One trained in the art can see by reviewing the high level mathematical formulas certainly developed by one with an extensive mathematical education shown in the above listed ten columns within Chou's application indicate an approach that restrictively controls the results, lacking flexibility and disallowing combination, multiple and relative use incorporation with its results found in Mr.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

Abendroth's freight transportation management application providing a truly unique transportation tool. Simply indicating that one is using parts of a list of parameters does not indicate prior art in the invention. How those parts are used and the complete flexibility, purpose and use of the subsequent choices is paramount.

The subject-matter of claim 32 as features in original claim 1 are inventive steps for the reasons such as automatically, electronically selecting and transmitting to shippers, carriers bid responses in a bid report in groups of seven for review and possible selection along others previously stated in this response.

Claims 33 – 36 do, in fact, contain features which in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer do meet requirements with respect to inventive steps. Unfortunately the United States Patent Office has, up to this point in time, refused to review all of the claims in Mr. Abendroth's application on their merits.

Combining Barni with Chou to reveal a carrier's name and phone number to the shipper, initially working on a completely anonymous basis, Chou is now being given the telephone number option by assuming that a skilled person would implement that step in such a manner after a carrier selection by the shipper. Claim 33, while offering an anonymous open system approach, electronically presents the carrier information to the shipper immediately following a shipper's selection, but this applicant's system also incorporates the use of private access networks in which all shipper names, carrier names and complete respective profiles are known as an important part of the system.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

Claim 34 as stated in relation with the supporting claims addressing transportation brokers and third party logistics (3PL) are not known in the state of the art or as indicated in the electronic auction systems of Chou or Berni as it is applied in this application. First, this is not a typical auction system as previously indicated and second, loads offered by brokers or 3PLs can be duplicate offerings of those by the original shipper, combined offerings, separate offerings, fixed or revised offerings all so indicated by prefixes and/or suffixes, none of which would be found with either Chou or Berni.

Claims 35 and 36 relating to prior explanations of other claims within this reply necessarily address a plurality of loads to an individual carrier, as a carrier being offered only one load would not be in business very long especially if that carrier were not successful in obtaining that one load. In addition, shippers necessarily will need to receive bids from a plurality of loads from a plurality of carriers, the methodology of this process being, as aforementioned, unique.

A listing of subject-matter and inventive steps contained in other claims not being examined by the United States Patent Office in Mr. Abendroth's application follow:

1. Unique revising of archived texts does not merely generate requests more efficiently but addresses revisions or changes due to errors by the shipper in previously submitted requests automatically adding letter suffixes indicating to carriers that the original request is no longer valid being superceded by the revised request. In addition various combinations of requests can be grouped for comparative pricing. Also, an entire year of freight can be entered for an annualized bid request along with both text and graphic load and loading specifications along with instructions can be downloaded into the requests.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

2. Other shipping entities can use a system such as transportation brokers and third party logistics companies differently than that known in the state of the art. However Mr. Abendroth asserts far more offering a very powerful transportation tool ability not capable of being provided by the other referenced submittals or at all being obvious to a skilled person – in fact, it is truly unique. Bids from multiple shippers are additionally defined by prefixes and suffixes.

3. Chou and Berni, as aforementioned, are entirely different applications addressing in a very fixed manner, specific fundamentals generating totally foreign results both unrelated to Mr. Abendroth's application as well as categorically restrictive which would deem the Cho and Berni approach completely unable to address the myriad of new versatile freight transportation parameters handled through Mr. Abendroth's inventive steps relative to shipper and carrier access.

4. Chou and Barni are very narrowly directed. Mr. Abendroth's automatic, electronically system selected and transmitted to shipper, carrier bid responses in groups of seven allowing for multiple inter-related areas and multiple combinations of alternatives in a totally different flexible use format tied into a "grand master bulletin board" concept is absolutely nothing like D2. To give D2 offering truncated portions of general aspects credit for unrelated isolated specific parts of Mr. Abendroth's application which in total address, in a manner never before envisioned, the myriad aspects comprising a unique and extremely flexible transportation tool approach to freight transportation management is awarding patent protection to another for concepts not provided, intended or perceived by that applicant.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

5. United States Patent Office has without question totally misunderstood the aforementioned "grand master bulletin board" subject-matter and therefore has incorrectly decided that nothing offered by the system comprises an inventive step. Being able to include all related facets of differing areas of transportation relative services on one all encompassing "grand master bulletin board" is an enormous concept requiring unique interrelating indexing with category prefixes and suffix abbreviations within the confines of a very flexible presentation, multiple interrelated offer, request and response, services format, with the capability of being delivered in changeable expanded or restricted areas to a huge field of specific differing participating entities. The unique transportation tool provided by the inventive steps within Mr. Abendroth's application allows for a flexibility and versatility in freight transportation management as never before possible.

6. The mirroring at other sites for the purpose of having Internet site backup to help prevent a degradation of services should one of the database servers not function properly, a standard practice with any and all Internet site operations along with filtering, sorting, saving, archiving and deleting of information on bulletin boards also being standard action in the field of text processing, Mr. Abendroth's submittal, while providing all of the aforementioned, also addresses substantially different additional operational elements through the use of the grand master bulletin board approach. Additional fractionalized mirroring along with variability in individual column identification as well as the number of columns of separate and private networks all integrated via the grand master bulletin board allows for thousands of shippers, third party logistics companies, brokers, carriers, etc. to function autonomously without sacrificing network to network, site to site communication all available on their own individual sites.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

7. Merely linking tracking, tracing, proof of delivery, billing, financial services, etc. to the Internet sites as may be a general practice with online marketplaces and portals along with the use of hyperlinks to other information sources is in and of itself not new, Mr. Abendroth's approach additionally addresses order entry, procurement, warehousing, etc. with multiple screens, but also provides for the integration of numerous differing service providers load numbering assignments for an individual load request, throughout its complete load cycle.

8. Equipment likened to a load can be offered by carriers to shippers along with specific origins and/or destinations. Leased or rented equipment likened to a load can be similarly addressed. Multiple delivered loads likened to a load, groups of loads likened to a load, tours for loads likened to a load, products likened to a load, warehousing likened to a load and other services likened to a load all being able to be addressed through the grand master bulletin board through the use of prefixes in the load nomenclature as well as descriptive phrasing substitution capabilities within the method and system along with additional bulletin board columns. Being able to then simultaneously view interrelationships of loads, equipment and service options on which to make decisions presents far more than merely a shipper request carrier bidding network but rather defines another inventive step in the transportation tool offering in overall freight transportation management.

9. Anonymity of the names of the shippers and carriers in an open system and knowing the names of the sippers and carriers in a private system or private access network, in both situations concealing the actual bids from all other bidders is unlike Chou and Berni, in which all vendors (carriers), with their names known or unknown, have the amount of their submitted bids known to the other bidders in an auction type system is exactly the opposite of the approach claimed

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

by Mr. Abendroth's inventive freight transportation management concept. This applicant's method and system is a universal transportation tool, not a cutthroat system allowing for one competitor to beat out another competitor by knowingly bidding just a few dollars under another's submitted amount – with even a one cent difference meaning success.

10. Adding a function that does not exist to the system indicated in Chou and then stating that it is obvious to equip a system in such a manner, when it is not obvious, and finally using that constructed situation to deny a valid claim appears arbitrary. Mr. Abendroth's method and system provides for totally separate functions, as a carrier (or third party) is able to just not submit a bid when requested or actually indicate that a bid will not be submitted, giving the shipper multiple options. Other uses that are also quite separate and are dramatically different in their result, like addressing bidding by carriers for the movement or re-location of empty containers back to port cities or other places as might be requested by the owners of the offered containers. A unique negative, zero or positive bidding option allows for one, more or all of the containers offered to be re-located by a container owner, bid on by carriers at no cost or even generating revenue for the container owners in some cases.

11. This applicant offers a method and system that also permits the entire operation and functionality from start to finish throughout the approach to be addressed via facsimile converted electronically using optical character recognition programs, via the internet, via e-mail and via telephone incorporating the use of interactive voice response (IVR), all electronically incorporated into the system.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

12. The method and system delves deep into carrier profile information as the variables are extremely complex and variable along with allowing shippers to override any and all carrier profile and/or specification factors in sending invitation to bid to carriers – this flexibility is quite important for numerous reasons in addressing the myriad of interlining, rental, broker, etc. relationships within the freight transportation industry not present in other applications. In addition it offers an automatic denial of carriers' (vendors') bid submittals to individual shippers (buyers) who might well meet carriers' shipper qualifications but one with which, for whatever reason, the carriers will not do business.

13. The method and system provides shipper (buyer) profile information to carriers (vendors) along with offering an automatic denial of information to individual carriers who might well meet buyers' carrier qualifications but one with which, for whatever reason, the shippers will not do business.

14. The method and system uses a central processing system and/or database and/or its components be they on the Internet and/or remote from the Internet. The use of such a central processing system, etc. is indicated as required within this applicant's claims to address technical operating features; however, some of which would necessarily be found in Chou and Barni as well as in any other Internet processing system addressing other areas and operations. This assumes that there is no assertion that the use of such a central processing system or database is disallowed or credited solely to Chou or Barni or else all Internet system applications for whatever purpose would be suspect.

15. The method and system allows for both shippers and carriers to be included on many individual shipper and/or carrier bulletin boards on individual

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

private access networks and/or systems all using different name and load identification numbers and authorization codes, yet via the grand master bulleting board approach along easy use and information access incorporating important data consolidation onto each individual shipper or carrier bulletin board.

16. Multiple screens, sorting and filtering is substantially different from other known techniques. In addition individual customization of separate shipper and carrier bulletin boards giving the appearance of having their own separate systems, along with individual columns and number of columns can also be variable, yet because of both master bulletin boards and the overriding grand master bulletin board inventive step, all shippers and carriers and their relative information remain electronically integrated providing real time data transfer creating total versatility in optional interrelationships between all participants in the system.

17. Certain grand master bulletin board options, available at all individual shipper and carrier levels of individual bulleting boards not in any way considered, available or even possible in other methods and systems. This particular multiple screen approach along with the optional simultaneous multiple screen viewing is unlike any known techniques. First the required format is provided within one grand master bulletin board being able to address loads (individual, multiple, combination, backhauls) and/or equipment (availability), and/or tours (routing), and/or products and/or services (warehousing, leasing, renting, financial). And, second, this applicant's approach allows in the multiple screen scenarios the transportation tool to be able interrelate each of these areas as never before possible.

Reply to Office Action

Appl. No.: 09/751,121 Art Unit: 3624

18. All central processing systems require at least one central processing unit, a memory for storing a database and a communication interface to the Internet to work.

CONCLUSION

Again, my method and system provides for a Grand Master Bulletin Board approach for freight management as never before which includes Master Bulletin Boards and Bulletin Boards both public and private allowing shippers and carriers which are buyers and sellers to address, compare individual and alternatives, coordinate, and analyze a myriad of critical interrelated aspects of the freight management, product and service environments to determine the best business decisions prior to responding all via one method and system.

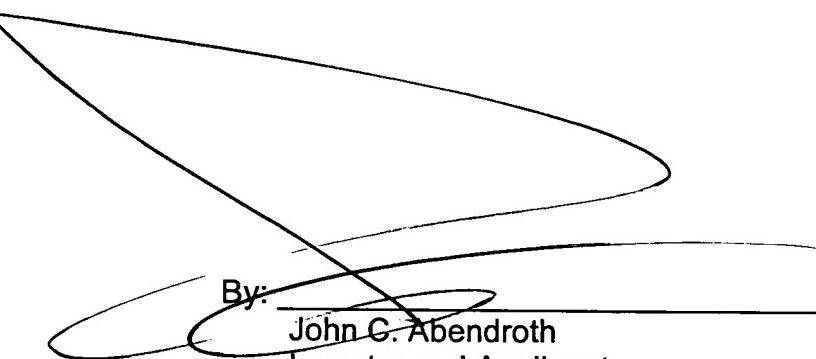
NOTE: With the unique flexibility of the Grand Master Bulletin Board method and system "transportation tool" a shipper (buyer) is allowed to review each of the results of multiple scenarios before making a final determination and/or bid selection as to the best approach, understanding that all participants can be required to meet specific qualifications to participate. This total integration of supply chain steps within one environment is literally the "Holy Grail" for optimal freight management. Also, using only portions of the possible features of the method and system for any particular situation does not invalidate the overall invention by requiring only one group of parameters or classifications be they in combination or separately. Public or private, loads, equipment, warehousing, products (goods or services), etc. are all integral parts of freight management.

Additionally, I in this and prior Replies has completely addressed and believe that I has conclusively discounted all of the referenced prior art considered

pertinent by the United States Patent and Trademark Office to Applicant's disclosure, thereby fully supporting that my patent application subject-matter does, in fact, comprise inventive steps, along with the currently amended claims which now contain that which has been argued in all of the independent claim limitations as well as the dependent claims completing the fully persuasive requirements and therefore, I earnestly solicit a Notice of Allowance for Claims 32 - 68 for his Method and System for E-Commerce Freight Management. Reconsideration by the United States Patent and Trademark Office of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectively submitted,

Date: 8/11/08

By: 
John C. Abendroth
Inventor and Applicant
11225 N. Prairie View Lane
Mequon, WI 53092

(414) 517-3101 Cell Phone
E-mail: jabendroth@jcambax.com